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THE
LIBRARY ASSISTANT

The Official Journal
of the Association of
Assistant Librarians

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
THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(Section of the Library Association)

HON. EDITOR W. B. STEVENSON

Hornsey Public Libraries

Editorial and Announcements

THE restrictions of paper control now make it necessary for the *Assistant* to appear as a bi-monthly. In order to provide as much space for contributors as possible, a smaller type-face has been used in this issue. The new type provides 25 per cent. more text without an undue sacrifice of legibility: it is set in Times Roman (8 point on a 9 point body) while the headings are set in Bodoni. We hope that readers will approve of our battledress.



Library Views-Letter, that fugitive and stimulating news-sheet, is no more. The following note from Bombardier J. F. W. Bryon, which he calls "Bread on the Waters," gives the reasons:—


"Perhaps the waters were too rough, or the bread too soft? It might even be that we were too impatient. Whatever the reason, *Library Views-Letter* has had to be abandoned as a failure, and we apologise for the trouble caused prospective recipients, and the disappointment to those who were enthusiastic.

"It was begun as an unofficial medium of expression for librarians, more particularly those in the Forces. We should have realized the two great obstacles in the path—the unpredictable variations in Service addresses, and the improbability of the initiator's continued enjoyment of the necessary leisure and facilities.

"Five letters were sent out. The first four were typed, and a single copy sent on its travels from member to member. No further trace has been found of them. Letter number five was duplicated, and a copy sent to each member. Since that date, several months ago, we have lost access to a typewriter, and our circumstances are not such as to permit of much writing, or even thought. What time is our own will be devoted to spasmodic articles for the professional press, whenever opportunity serves, and inspiration co-operates.

"Our regret that the project failed is great, and we still think it a good idea. But we concede that there is no justification for a separate organ for librarians, who have open to them the *Assistant* and other journals for the publication of topical articles, and hope that those who may have received a stray copy of the *Letter*, and have been incensed or aroused by it, will commit their thoughts to paper and the Hon. Editor.

"Apologies, therefore, and good wishes, to the sixty people who wrote, wishing to be enrolled."



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Students are reminded that applications for the correspondence courses, in part of sections, to commence in April, must reach Mrs. S. W. Martin, Hon. Education Secretary, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24, by 20th March, after which date no application may be considered. For full particulars of subjects and fees, see the *Library Association Year Book*.

The index to the 1942 volume has been published this month and should have been forwarded with this issue to all subscribers. As a matter of economy, only 500 copies of the index have been printed. Members who wish to obtain copies should apply to Mrs. S. W. Martin, the Honorary Education Secretary.

Children's Books, 1942 (continued)

Ida A. Newmar

COP SHOOTER, by Kit Higson (Oxford University Press, 6s. 6d.), is a book for boys who have a love for animals. Simon Shooter, an orphan, lives with an embittered Aunt Marthe, who highly disapproves of Simon and his world. Simon gets his own back on life with a half-drowned puppy which he rescues from a dustbin. Cop is the puppy's name, and on him Simon bestows all his care and attention. But Cop gets kidnapped by one, malicious Jem Salmon, aided and abetted by Aunt Marthe. The story is well told, and has plenty of incident to keep interest throughout, although the sordid victimization by Jem and Aunt Marthe is just a little artificial at times. But children find a kind of morbid enjoyment in pitying the ill-treated hero, and such victimization has an awful sort of fascination for them, especially if the hero's courage in misfortune is rewarded and it all comes right in the end. A very similar feeling is implicit in Robb White's *Sailor in the sun* (Lane, 7s. 6d.), where Cherry Lanning, an orphan, goes to live with a gaunt aunt and a sinister crippled uncle on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. The uncle hates little girls, so the unattractive aunt cuts off Cherry's hair, dresses her in trousers, and makes her pose as a boy. But she meets Jeb Stuart, who befriends her and teaches her how to build and sail boats. Then plenty of things happen. The narration is good, and the technical details of sailing are well introduced. The descriptions of the sky in good and bad weather, and of squalls, bring vivid pictures to the mind. The eerie atmosphere of the leaky house in which they had to live, the horrid spectre of the crippled uncle who terrifies her and who spies on Cherry and her aunt when they aren't looking, are just a little overdone, but Cherry is courageous and deals with her misfortune in a way that would satisfy any child.

Yet another orphan story comes from Ruth Clark in *Jenny Spring* (Dent, 7s. 6d.). Here again the pity of the reader is aroused by the pathetic Jenny who is tired of her orphanage life. She runs away with the "Pest," a little boy of five. Their adventures make up this book. There is nothing particularly striking about the story, though the "Pest" and Mungo become quite real and lovable. It should appeal to girls of ten.

Two up-to-date mystery stories are to be found in D. A. Lovell's *Mystery of the bronze frog* (Cape, 5s.) and *Bunkle began it*, by E. Pardoe (Routledge, 6s.). In the former a lecture on Chinese bronzes forms the basis for the mystery. One of the boys who has to remain at school during the holidays finds many adventures with some furniture removers, in the course of which he discovers the valuable missing bronze. It is a good little story, full of the kind of excitement that boys love, and includes at least one interesting character—a tramp—who befriends and helps him to solve the mystery. The tramp's "rest home" in the barn of a wealthy lady is an interesting

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part of the story. *Bunkle began it* is more topical and tells the story of three children, Bunkle, and Robin De Salis, evacuated to the West Country, who meet a character their hotel whom you recognize at once as the villain of the piece. The children's father, who is a member of the Intelligence Service, comes to visit them, ostensibly for a holiday, but in reality to do a little investigating. Of course the three children, and especially Bunkle, get mixed up in it, and do quite a smart bit of work in helping their father to round up a fifth columnist (who is very realistically a local farmer in the Home Guard) and two German spies, one of whom is the villain of the hotel. Though short, this story has plenty of action, and the characters act naturally—there is plenty of interest for boys and girls here.

For pure fantasy there are two most entertaining books, *The Great Geppy*, by Gene de Bois (Hale, 7s. 6d.) and *Poo-Poo and the dragons*, by C. S. Forester (Joseph, 6d.). They are both in the "silly symphony" class. Poo-Poo's dragon pets reminded me of the amiable Reluctant Dragon of Walt Disney fame. As a domesticated pet, Poo-Poo's dragon would be a valuable asset to any household, especially when he lights his father's pipe with a puff of fire from his nostrils and polishes the hall floor with his tail. Geppy is a striped horse with the gift of human speech, who is sent to solve the mystery of stolen money from a circus.

I think this war has improved everybody's political geography, so that books giving the stories of children in other countries are especially welcome. This type of book when well done is always popular, and in these days of widening horizons there cannot be too many of them, so that whereas geographical or historical facts in themselves may be dull enough, when they are brought in as the supports for an imaginative story they are unconsciously and easily absorbed without the children being aware of it.

Tekhi's hunting, by W. Holmes (Bell, 6s.), and *Ake and his world*, by Malmberg (Hale, 6s.), are in the same class as those just mentioned and are excellent books of their kind.

From an historical point of view, *American story*, by Holroy and Sewell (Arnold, 6d.), is excellently written for children of 12-14. America's history is simplified and condensed into a most readable form. It contains much interesting and authentic information, including quotations from the message to Congress on 6th November, 1941, the meaning of the forty-eight stars and thirteen stripes, the growth of the States from the first colonies, the rapid expansion from east to west and the geographical factors governing the settlement and industries of the various States—all are explained simply and directly. There is a picture supplement which consists of a collection of plates—reproductions from films based on American history and development. A short chapter on American literature gives a brief outline of the most famous American authors. Altogether this is a most informative book.

Canada bound, by Jasper Stenbridge (Oxford University Press, 4s. 6d.), does something of the same kind of thing for Canada as *American story* does for America, except that the subject matter is presented in guide-book fashion, seen through the eyes of the two children crossing the country by the C.P.R. The history of each famous place through which they travel is given briefly. The photographic plates are good. There is a specially interesting chapter on summer camps which should appeal to boys.

A book which I think many people will welcome is *How man became a giant*, by Ilin Segal (Routledge, 7s. 6d.). It is the vast story of evolution written for children. Beginning with life in the primeval forests, the authors trace the development of man from the animal to the human state, explaining how he gradually extended his power over nature and established himself on the earth. Especially interesting is the story of the growth of thought and the evolution of drama and poetry from superstition and religion. The book is excellently written and brings an otherwise adult subject at last

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within the ken of children. *Young sailors of Sidon*, by E. Tarshis (Harrap, 5s. 6d.) is another good book for children of this age. It gives an outline of life in Phoenician days.

The "under nines" have done well with the usual characters this year. It is surprising that some of these well-tried favourites of the under nines have become well-minded. *Mumfie marches on*, by Katherine Tozer (Murray, 6s.), is an example. Mumfie joins the Home Guard and performs deeds of valour against Gobbles, a fifth columnist and a German invader. The subsidiary characters, Ivan Ivanovitch, a highly educated Russian, and Jelly Pipsqueak, a peg-legged sailor, are Mumfie's most able supporters in his excitingly topical adventures. Illustrations in line and colour decorate this book and are equal in attraction to the stories.

Gwyneth Rae, in *Mary Plain in wartime* (Routledge, 5s.), also makes full use of present conditions to form the background of another story for the always popular Mary Plain series. Mary Plain draws much glory to herself by helping to capture a Nazi spy, but not before she has upset a lot of people by giving a shrill blast on her whistle which sends them pell-mell into a shelter all for nothing.

Sam Pig and Sally, by Allison Uttley (Faber, 6s.), gives us more tales of the famous Sam Pig, in the pleasant background of field and farm. Miss Margaret Tempest, who usually illustrates Miss Uttley's books, once confessed that it had never occurred to her that these books would be bought by a public library! But any librarian is aware of the popularity of Master Pig, whose foibles are delightfully human, and therefore a source of delight to children.

Tusky runs away, by Charles Duncan (Chambers, 2s. 6d.), is another elephant story. Tusky (the elephant) runs away from his safe home in an Indian village, he is found by Dombey, a little native boy, but they get lost again. Their adventures with all the other animals of the Indian landscape form the subject of the book. They meet an ostrich with his head properly in the sand, hippopotami, hyenas, bats, monkeys, etc., and, of course, after a final adventure with a crocodile, arrive home quite safely.

An unusual book for children under nine is Jan Karafiát's *Fireflies* (Allen & Unwin, 5s.). It is a Czechoslovakian fairy tale. Little Brontchek, which is the Czechoslovakian for "firefly," is the hero and he is as well known to children of that country as Peter Rabbit is to English children. The boastful and over-confident young Brontchek grows into a wise hard-working firefly father, under the persevering guidance of his family and friends. The story has delightful illustrations by Emil Weiss, the attraction of which lies in the human characteristics of each figure.

We have been greatly indebted to Wanda Gág for several inspired picture-books and this year's contribution, *Nothing-at-all*, is the story of a little dog who grows from a Nothing into a Something by the exercise of a magic art told him by the jackdaw. The story is as artistically written as the illustrations are drawn, and has just the right rhythmic lilt so beloved of all children. To get this rhythm I understand that the author recites her stories aloud when walking along, feeling the flow of expression and that she can get exactly the right-sounding phrase to fit the meaning.

Cherrystones, by Eleanor Farjeon (Joseph, 3s. 6d.), is a small book of poems made up for the ceremonial tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, after cherry pie. Each stone has a poem to suit the particular character, and each poem is illustrated with line drawings even the pig-sty is represented. The poems are charming.

More attention is being paid nowadays to the older awkward-age children, and the books that have been published this year for them are of quite a high standard. For girls there are the Sue Barton books by Boyleston—this year's is *Sue Barton—run nurse* (Lane, 7s. 6d.). In this class come also *Jill on the land*, by J. Matthews (Lutterworth Press, 5s.), and *First stage*, by Helen McKay (Lutterworth Press, 7s. 6d.).

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Barton becomes a rural nurse and Jill takes the bull by the horns, so to speak, and becomes a land girl. *First stage* tells the story of children at school who want to become actors and actresses. The idea is good, but the style, which aims nobly at modernity and sophistication, sometimes falls short. The appeal is necessarily restricted to the girls who are interested in stage careers.

For boys and girls, *Lights of freedom*, ed. by A. A. Michie and W. Graebner (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.), makes most interesting reading. The book consists of true stories of people who have taken active part in some sphere of the war—the Coventry Blitz covered by the doctor of the Warwick and Coventry Hospital; the Lofoten raid is described by one of the men who took part, etc. The book is a companion volume to *their finest hour*.

Students' Problems

THE DECEMBER EXAMINATIONS

ELEMENTARY

A. J. Walford

ELEMENTARY LITERARY HISTORY.—*First Paper*: A paper which should have been universally acceptable. The majority of the questions were perfectly straightforward, dealing, for example, with the dramatic and poetical works of Marlowe, the works of George Eliot, the life and works of Robert Browning. It is to be hoped that there were not many omissions of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, of Browning's dramatic monologues, and George Eliot's work as a pastocking. Question 4 (Name three important works by Ben Jonson, Fielding, Richardson, Carlyle, Shelley) required a mere list which all but the complete ignoramus could have provided in ten minutes.

The twentieth century came in for a fair amount of attention: its poetry as a Q. 7 alternative, its Irish drama in Q. 8. The latter was particularly full in its scope, covering not only Shaw, O'Casey, Synge, and Yeats, but lesser dramatists of the calibre of John Ervine and Lennox Robinson. Indeed, in this question, as in number 7, over-treatment was the danger to be avoided. An attractive question was one which led for an account of Pepys and Evelyn as Restoration diarists. The comparison between Pepys, admiralty official and man of the world, who wrote his *Diary* (1660-69) in shorthand and never intended it for publication, and Evelyn, a scholar and collector, who wrote with an eye to posterity and ranged over several decades and countries, is clearly called for. The one diary, a very human document, gave rise to that type of gossiping memoirs which is the very stuff of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century domestic history, while the other is a careful record, but of slight literary value.

The discussion of History in Fiction (Q. 7 alternative) is probably most convincingly dealt with by periods—Margaret Irwin for the England of Charles I, Preedy for nineteenth-century Europe, D. L. Murray and Miss D. K. Broster for the Jacobite wars, C. S. Forester for the Napoleonic Wars, not forgetting the basic contributions of Scott, Stevenson, Thackeray, Lytton, Ainsworth and Weyman. (It is hoped that too many candidates did not quote Baroness Orczy and Sabatini as realist portrayers of the French Revolution.) The question also calls for a comparison of techniques. The more realistic: the factual, biographical approach of Margaret Irwin, who takes historical personages as her heroes and heroines—a Montrose or a Rupert;

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or the more romantic school of Preedy and Forester, who provide their own leading figures against an historical background? Certain single novels, such as Helen Ashton's *Swan of Usk* and Rose Macaulay's *They were defeated*, are very fine examples of historical biography in fiction.

What has Gray's *Elegy* in common with *In Memoriam* and *Lycidas*, and how do they differ from them? Clearly, the latter two elegies were occasioned by personal grief over the loss of a friend—King in Milton's case, and Hallam in Tennyson's. Gray's *Elegy*, on the other hand, is impersonal and in the fashion of contemporary verse musings such as Edward Young's *Night thoughts* and Blair's *The Grave*. It is didactic in honour of "th' unhonour'd Dead," whereas Milton used the elegy as a vehicle for attack on the English Church. *In Memoriam*, a collection of elegies rather than a single elegy, is an expression not only of poetical moods and reflections but of faith in God, immortality, and the millennium.

ELEMENTARY ADMINISTRATION.—*Second Paper*: Confirms the impression created by the First Paper. Five simple definitions, an account of the subjects embraced by Dewey's 900 class, and a description of book-processes from delivery by bookseller to issue to the public—these are indeed elementary questions. In the case of a difference between main and added entry, the subject of Q. 1, much depends on carefully chosen examples. Presuming the dictionary catalogue form, the author entry will carry full bibliographical details, unlike added entry under, say, subject, with brief title, edition and date only. In the case of the classified catalogue, the added entry (alternative location, analytical, etc.) will be subordinated and related to the main entry. In both cases tracings will be given on the back of the main entry card.

A profitable question is number 5, on the wider use of pseudonyms. The chief objections to this practice are on the scores of confusion and inconsistency: the same author (e.g. Marjorie Bowen) may use several pseudonyms; several authors may use the same pseudonym. And where is one to draw the line?—the consensus of public opinion is by no means stable. Much better, surely, to restrict the use of pseudonyms either to authors whose real names are not known, or else to extend it to a favoured few whose pen names are honoured (e.g. George Eliot) or widely known. The author's family name is the authoritative name and departures from it should be regarded as exceptions.

Third Paper: One which calls for little comment. The allotting and checking of routine duties, a description of one's library and its object, the National Central Library and its relation to the Regional Library Bureaux—these should be well within the grasp of any wideawake assistant, although too often answers on these topics tend to be mechanical and unenterprising.

To the student who has taken the precaution of scanning the files of current library reports and bulletins in the possession of the A.A.L. Library, the question on the library bulletins must have been very acceptable. The final question, 5, the effects on book production of the war during 1942, calls for a greater range of thought. Not merely the scarcity of paper, but its poor and fragile quality (this applies, naturally, to casing and other materials used), and the increasing use of the pamphlet form call for comment. How will such books stand up to public use, how will they react to binding?

General Comment: An easy set of papers, with an occasional question for the student with initiative—a rare bird, alas!

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INTERMEDIATE

A. J. Walford

CATALOGUING.—Theoretical Paper : It must be difficult for the examiners to bring changes on questions in this paper, and one is not surprised to find several of them familiar reading. Thanks, furthermore, to a comprehensive text-book such as Mr. Sharp's, the ground to be tested becomes even more stereotyped. For the history of union catalogues (Q. 2) and a discussion of the disadvantages of card and sheaf catalogues (Q. 6), for instance, one need go little farther than the standard book on the subject, while the rules for specific subject entry (Q. 3) have been covered, memorably, in Cutter's code.

Two questions were drawn from the Joint Code, one (Q. 4) requiring the A.L.A. rules for dissertations and official publications of exhibitions. But why "A.L.A. rules"? Is the student presumed to be in possession of the recent A.L.A. preliminary revision of the Code? The other (Q. 8) simply asks for the rules for newspapers and transactions, as opposed to other periodicals. Annotation of works of Fiction, Politics and Travel (Q. 5) calls for a common-sense application of the general rules for annotation as laid down in Mr. Sayers's little pamphlet. (Probably few students can get access to Savage's treatise.)

Qs. 1 and 7 were inter-related, to some extent. Difference in imprint and collation of entries for university as opposed to medium-sized public library catalogues is obviously based on the needs of one's clientele. The scholar and professor will require considerable bibliographical detail in their catalogue entries, whereas the ordinary reader is rather concerned with elementary book selection and location, and would probably find detail confusing. Q. 1 offers a useful diversion to the student with ideas: "No code of cataloguing," it runs, "could be adopted in all points by everyone. Discuss." Variations are manifestly unavoidable in practice. Cataloguing, like classification, must keep the convenience of the public constantly in mind, and the university, national and special library public has not a great deal in common with the ordinary public library borrower. While this is not to say that Library of Congress printed cards might not be acceptable to both types, it is another matter to use those cards subject to one rigid code. What two libraries—even public libraries—see exactly eye to eye regarding pseudonymous and anonymous works, for example? The eight divergencies of opinion between the A.L.A. and L.A. Committees in compiling the Joint Code also speak for themselves. And "everyone" presumably includes different nationalities and languages. Truly, a searching question.

Q. 9, requiring subject headings for ten book titles, touches the average student of cataloguing at his weakest point, but it repays examination and presents no real difficulties, provided that one keeps close to the rules for specific subject entry and remembers to co-ordinate and subordinate references. The one awkward title was "Defence against the night bomber." On the score that we use the heading CIVIL DEFENCE (*vice* AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS) for dealing with the passive side of the question, perhaps AIR DEFENCE, a technical term, might serve. Reference will be necessary from WORLD WAR, 1939—*Air operations*. Altogether, a very fair paper.

Practical Paper : An effort was obviously made in this paper to give the candidate rather more than the bare title-page information. In several cases there were quotations from the preface, cover titles were given, and bibliographical data were fairly ample. The student must have felt that he was at grips, if not with the actual book, then at least with a sizable approach to it for cataloguing purposes.

The title-pages themselves asked for honest and concentrated work rather than laid insidious traps for the unwary, and this is as it should be. The first was a Catalogue

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of Manuscripts and main entry is under the Cathedral Library concerned, and not the compiler. Much the same applies to number 3—*A Descriptive Catalogue of the Musical Instruments recently exhibited at the Royal Military Exhibition, London, 1890*. From the preface of the latter it is clear that T. B. Shaw-Hellier is the general editor and C. R. Day the actual compiler of the catalogue. *Roll of the graduates of the University of Aberdeen, 1901-1925*, compiled by Theodore Watts (No. 9), again, requires main entry under ABERDEEN—University.

Application of rule 63 of the Code, on compilations of laws, is called for in No. 10. *The Rent and Mortgage Interest Restrictions Acts, 1920-1939*, with introduction, notes, rules and forms, and the text of the repealed Acts, by Archibald Spafford. As in rule 12 on commentaries, everything depends on the mutual status of text and commentary—which forms the main feature? The wording of the title-page favours main entry under GREAT BRITAIN—*Statutes*, with subject entry under LANDLORD AND TENANT and MORTGAGES, in addition to title entry.

The names of the "Five Clergymen" responsible for *The Gospel according to St. John, after the authorized version, newly compared with the original Greek and revised* are given in the preface. The work therefore loses its anonymity, and it would appear needlessly pedantic to give added entry under title, following rule 112. (It is to be hoped that "Five Clergymen" was not regarded as a pseudonym!) Classified catalogue author index entry is under ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

Knowledge of subject headings was but lightly tested in *A Scot's Dialect Dictionary* (refer here from ENGLISH LANGUAGE—*Dialects*) and The Highland Division (by Eric Linklater (a Ministry of Information issue on behalf of the War Office); on the school of cataloguing will favour main entry under the latter body, the other under Linklater, thanks to the inadequate provisions of rule 60 and the lack of any evidence here to indicate the author's status. And surely no candidate should falter over subject entry for Brockwell's *Leonardo da Vinci*?

Finally, *Contemporary British Philosophy. Personal statements (Second Series)*. . . Edited by J. H. Muirhead—a collection of essays by various contemporary thinkers. So far, so good. On the half-title, however, appears the wording: *Library of Philosophy. Edited by J. H. Muirhead, LL.D., Contemporary British Philosophy*—demonstrating that this is a volume of a series within a series, and that J. H. Muirhead is general series editor as well as editor of this particular work. Two publishing houses and two places of publication are given but only the London one need be mentioned, followed by "(etc.)."

CLASSIFICATION

Stanley G. Saunders

The general impression made on candidates by the December papers must have been one of surprise; pleasant in the case of the theory paper, unpleasant at the practical paper.

Q. 1 dealt with that hardy annual, the difference between natural and artificial classification. One has to infer from the regularity with which this question is set that it is one of the least soundly grasped points of the syllabus. Illustrations had to be given, if possible, from standard book classifications. At the risk of being denounced for heresy, this commentator would suggest that in relation to an actual classification of books all classes except Generalia and Belles Lettres are arranged by the natural characteristic of subject, the two exceptions by the artificial, but nevertheless

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essential, characteristic of form. In an *ideal* sense an example may be given from Dewey's schedule at 615. At 615.2-.3 drugs may be arranged naturally—following the order of 546-7. At 615.6-.7 the same material can be arranged by artificial characteristics, (1) by method of administration, (2) by physical effects on the body assimilating the drug.

Q. 2 was a straightforward one on the fundamental bases of logical division. To explain precisely what is meant by the two limits of this process—the Summum Genus and Infima Species—candidates would have to show a knowledge of the Five Predicables, and extension and intension as exemplified in the Tree of Porphyry.

Q. 3 was a context question on Jevons, and could not very easily have been answered without reference to its setting. It involved the principle that classification can only be as efficient as current thought and state of knowledge allows.

Q. 4 involved the theory of the "Generalialia" class. By and large, it can be stated that, except for Brown's scheme, the Generalialia class is provided for *books* which will not conveniently fit into the other classes provided for arranging *subjects* as expressed in books. The question also called for a knowledge of Brown's peculiar theory of a Generalialia class.

Q. 5 merely demanded a description of the provision made for flexibility in the notations of the Dewey, Brown and L. of C. schemes.

Q. 6 asked how far Dewey's recommendation, that the nature and specialities of each library should be considered when applying class numbers, is likely to affect practical classification. This would depend on how far the classifier is aware of the quality and quantity of special demand in his library, the aim of the library, and how far readers make their special wants known. It would be interesting to know whether any candidates debated this question in relation to the highly centralized book selection recommended in Mr. McColvin's suggested reorganization of our libraries.

Q. 7 called for a comparative answer on Brown and Dewey's treatment of history and geography. (Why do the examiners mislead candidates by misquoting the captions of Dewey's classes? 900 is primarily History—not as the examiners suggest, Geography and travels.) This was an admirable opportunity to consider the advantages and disadvantages of collecting all material about a country and its history at one place, or, alternatively, separating it for the benefit of the economic historian, the archaeologist, the geographer and the historian.

Q. 8 was the only original question on the paper. It was the first time in my recollection that Miss Kelley's theories have been recognized by the examiners. The question concerned Miss Kelley's principle that classification of books *per se* should be quite broad, backed up by very closely defined and closely analytical cataloguing.

Q. 9 merely needed a descriptive answer on any one Main Class of the L. of C. scheme.

Practical.—A, 323.154; B, 913.4; C, 329.943; D, 330.1; E, 625.79; F, 301.15; G, 641.57; H, 741; I, 016.35; J, 243 (to be consistent with C—Psychology of a subject is placed with the subject); K, 358.3; L, 720.942/940.5; M, 630.1; N, 332; O, 331.2544; P, 395, 010/655.5; Q, 215; R, 726.8/914.2; S, 382.

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Reading as an Adventure¹

Noel Streatfeild

WHEN I was thinking over my talk for to-day, I thought that if we were going to think of children's books, we must get in the mood, and the best way to do that is to remember the books we first loved. I cast back my mind, and at once *Little black Sambo* came to me. I can't even remember the room in which I read it, but I know I was sitting by a bright fire. I can see the little book vividly even now as I talk to you. I am sure that if you look back into your own memories, you too will have some first book to recall, the magic of which you can still recapture. Perhaps it was Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* or *Mrs. Tiggy Winkle*—or, judging by your youthful appearance, it might be *Babar*. Books like these are a delight to every child, for their few lines of text faced by a brightly coloured picture enable the reader to "read" the book after hearing it once or twice—an achievement which gives great satisfaction to a small child.

Places are associated in my mind with the books I read as a child. My father was a parson and we lived in a rambling old vicarage—I read most of my books curled up on a wide window-seat at either end of which hung a cage of canaries. So my first book memories are sprinkled over with bird-seed! In the summer holidays my father read us *The prisoner of Zenda* and Sir Walter Scott. The latter we detested. At birthdays and Christmas there was that thrilling parcel which you knew must be a book. There were curious old books belonging to my parents as well—I am sure you have never even heard of them—*The cherry stones*, *The children of Abbot's Muir Manse*, and a particularly choice story called *Gertie and May*. Old-fashioned books of course, sentimental probably, but they must have been extraordinarily well written to live so vividly in one's memory.

All of us in this room have been fortunate enough to remember a childhood spangled with books. And yet—leaving aside the present-day abnormal conditions—England is behind most other countries in the production of children's books. Who is to blame? The parents? The publishers? Or the authors? Let's take the parents and relations first.

Every Christmas I compel myself to visit the bookshops and to endure the nauseating experience of hearing parents, uncles and aunts asking the assistants for "A big book for about three and sixpence." Or I meet the adult who asks, "Have you anything nice with an historical background for a girl? Oh no, not Charles the Second, we've had him. Oh, I shouldn't like Victoria—we've had her. Elizabeth? Well—perhaps. I always think hers is such a pretty period." Now there are two schools of thought as to children's reading. The first is to allow a child to read anything and everything, and the ideal home, to my mind, is one in which books have been collected for generations, and can be dipped into from the time the child can crawl. The second is to close the doors to everything but the best. This should be the rule in every home in regard to current publications. No matter how well written a book may be it should not be admitted into a home if it is badly illustrated and produced. But, on the other hand, beautiful illustrations should never excuse shoddy writing. The writing, the illustrations and the format of a book must all be good. Follow that standard and at once you make an end of the ghastly rubbish about girls' schools and the rehearsed versions of the Bible and Shakespeare and Heaven knows what else, badly illustrated in crude colours.

Now what about the publishers? To begin with, I cannot imagine how the objec-

¹ Summary of a paper read to the Association of Children's Librarians

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tionable expression "Juvenile" came to be used—it is enough to damn a book at once. Why do publishers push their children's books to the end of their lists? How many publishers advertise children's books just as carefully as they do their literature for adults? Because of the way in which publishers regard their children's books the newspapers follow suit. Almost anybody seems to review children's books, and jumble them all together—good, bad and indifferent. Why do all children's books come out at once? The newspapers are not entirely to blame for their insulting attitude to children's books. How can they be selective when they are swamped? It's an important point this; bad publicity does untold harm. In America tremendous care is taken over children's books, just as much as—if not more than—that over adult books. They do not appear in one indigestible meal at Christmas. With what result? Long, careful and critical reviews in the best positions in the papers.

Are the authors the trouble? Are we to blame? Yes, but it is not surprising that we authors are apt to look down on our work for children, when publishers, press and booksellers combine to regard them as of little importance. Undoubtedly we allow ourselves to be affected by intellectual "snobbism." We hate—at least I do—to be told that our children's books are better than those we have written for adults. I sometimes look up at the skies, where presumably the shades and ghosts of past authors reside, and say, "Robert Louis, you who wrote a children's masterpiece, do you mind that it is by your work for children that you are mostly remembered now? I bet you minded when you were alive. . . . Kipling, your 'thin red line' and flag-wagging are out of date now, but just look at *Just so stories*!—how do you feel about that?" And to Lewis Carroll, sitting there on his cloud, neat and prim, I would say, "Do you know that they are still reading *Alice*?" I can imagine him replying, "Dear, dear! Curiouser and curiouser!" Mrs. Molesworth and Mrs. Ewing and E. Nesbit knew what they were doing. They unashamedly devoted their energies to writing for children. They must be laughing at us now for the snobs we are—they always knew that their work was worth while.

So it seems that all three classes are to blame—the parents for their lack of intelligent interest in what their children read, the publishers and authors for their disdainful attitude towards children's books. What of the future then? Now, when we are fighting for time and leisure for everybody after the war. I myself have only learnt to value time properly since I began to spend over forty hours a week on war service. I have to fight for time. Time to think. Time to select the right word as against the banal. Time to read. But what in the name of wonder is the good of time if we don't know how to make use of it? During my work in the dockside shelters during the blitz, I noticed that so many people had nothing to do during the long nights. When I asked them if they would like a book to read, they would answer, "Oh, no, dearie, I never read." What has happened to our system of education that such a statement can be possible? A child should grow up feeling that books are a part of life. Reading is such an adventure! There is magic in words, in the past, in the present, in the future, other people's lives and other people's loves, all waiting between the covers of a book. Because I believe that, given the best when young, love of the best continues and permeates the whole life, I do pray that all here dedicate themselves to fighting for the best for children. In this difficult time for the book world we can still wage war for the best that is possible, so that when peace comes, if we have not moved forward at least we have not slipped backwards. Leisure-time for everyone with the security to enjoy it. That is the post-war world we hope to build. Ours is the opportunity of showing the children—the future citizens—how best to use it.

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Results of "A Librarian's Quiz"

ENTRIES were not very numerous, but were very high in quality. No completely correct result was received, but in view of the difficulty of some of the references, perhaps this was to be expected. The chief stumbling blocks seemed to be the quotations from Baudelaire and Proust. The Editor is grateful to competitors for reminding him of two obvious mistakes. Pablo Segovia—The Guitarist—should, of course, be Andres Segovia, and "J. J. Connington" is Alfred Walter Stewart. All the competitors, with a nice sense of delicacy, forbore to mention that Sir John Harington was the inventor of the W.C.

The prize goes to Private F. Rutherford of the Royal Army Pay Corps for an excellent paper, which was almost complete. Congratulations are due to the runners-up: J. G. Chope, Miss C. W. J. Higson and Dr. C. B. Muriel Lock. The last sent a paper which was a model of research work and erudition. The answers are as follows:—

1. (a) Lautreamont—*Song of Maldoror*. (b) Auden—*Poems*, 2nd Edition XII. (c) Baudelaire—*L'Invitation au voyage*. (d) W. B. Yeats—*The second coming*. (e) Milton—*Areopagitica*.

2. Sculpture. Architecture. The Novel and Criticism. Painting. Architecture and Furniture designing. Poetry. The Cinema. Music (Songs). Poetry and the Novel. Ballet. The Short Story. Poetry ("proverbial philosophy"). Architecture. Music (Guitar Player). Poetry. Sculpture. Painting. The Novel. Music. Music (Pianist).

3. (a) Sterne—*Sentimental journey*. (b) Proust—*Swann's Way*. (c) Melville—*Moby Dick*. (d) Tolstoy—*War and peace*. (e) T. E. Lawrence—*Seven pillars of wisdom*. (f) Joyce—*Ulysses*. (g) Doughty—*Arabia deserta*. (h) Scott—*The Talisman*. (i) Dickens—*David Copperfield*.

4. Sir John Harington (satire). E. E. Cummings (poems). F. Delius (opera). G. J. Nathan (theatre criticism). J. Joyce (Pamphlet: his first publication). Wyndham Lewis (novel). Alban Berg (opera). F. Goya (etchings). Hugh McDiarmaid (poem). Salvador Dali (painting). Henry Miller (novel). T. S. Eliot (play). Ernest Hemingway (book on bull-fighting). E. Elgar (concert overture).

5. Michael Arlen. J. J. Connington. Joseph Conrad. E. M. Delafield. Clemence Dane. H. D. S. S. Van Dine.

6. (a) Henri Rousseau—Painter and exciseman. (b) Haydn's Surprise Symphony. (c) An extreme form of art, the precursor of surrealism. (d) Music for use (Paul Hindemith's phrase). (e) The Wild Men—post-impressionist painters, including Matisse, Rouault, Vlaminck, Van Dongen. (f) Group of French composers—Honegger, Auric, Poulenc, Durey, Tailleferre, Milhaud.



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Sad Story

E. H. Colwell

See McColvin's Report, page 192, Case 3 (c)

Hear the sad tale of Mary Snooks
Who wished to spend her life with books,
Imparting to the Great Unheeding
All her delight and joy in reading.

From earliest days until her prime
She was immured—oh, what a crime!—
In an examination room,
That menace to a maiden's bloom.
At last Matriculation o'er,
Nineteen years old, she gained the door
Of — — University,
And settled down with energy
To persevere day after day
Until she won the prized B.A.

Now twenty-two, poor Mary Snooks,
Has not attained a life with books,
But still must labour two years more
At Library School in library lore.
But twenty-four brings her a thrill,
A Grade Two Unit foots the bill,
Appoints her on the staff, what's more,
Pays her one-seventy-one pounds four !

With deep devotion, Mary Snooks
Continues studying lesson books,
Evincing interest, by the way,
In work with children, strange to say.

At twenty-six for pastures new
She seeks—one *must* have work to do—
So enters for a two-years' course
In Child Psychology, what's worse,
She does it in her own "spare time."
While earning one-nine-eight pounds
nine.

At twenty-nine Miss Snooks the meek
Attains ambition's highest peak,
A Fellowship is her reward
For ten years' study without board.
"Well qualified !" the Chiefs agree,
"Children's Librarian you shall be
In Grade Four Ugit—this your prize
To three-eight-nought pounds soon to
rise !"

Miss Snooks, B.A. and F.L.A.,
Was now allowed to spend her day
In trivial administration
Varied with libr'y demonstration.
But habit called her strongly still,
She'd had no time to live at will,
Now she had lost the trick of it—
Her interest dwindled bit by bit.

At last, in utter desperation,
She *married*—far beneath her station,
A worthy soul—'tis true—and male—
But only Non-Professional Scale.

So be forewarned, ambitious friend,
By Mary Snooks's tragic end,
Her many gifts could not avail
To alter the McColvin Scale.

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On the Editor's Table

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. Rules for filing catalog cards. (A.L.A. 1942.) \$2.00. This manual of rules for alphabetizing is "offered as representing the best accepted practice," and is based on a comparative study of filing rules in both large and small libraries. The treatment is minute and comprehensive: a useful appendix recommends selected rules for small libraries. W. B. S.

H. S. HIRSHBERG. Subject guide to reference books. (A.L.A. 1942.) \$4.00. This book, designed as a ready reference tool for the librarian's desk, is a subject guide to frequently asked reference questions. The basis is, of course, the invaluable Mudge, but many additional books are referred to. The compiler has consulted librarians from various large libraries in the United States. American books form the bulk of the entries; but there is much helpful information for the English librarian. The book is well printed and set out, and contains a good index. W. B. S.

V. G. PINTRESS. Elementary Costing for Libraries. ("Librarian" Professional Text-books—III.) 6s. The author of this little book states that it is "only an elementary introduction to a subject with immense possibilities." After a careful study of the theories propounded, I must say at once that I am still not convinced of the "immense possibilities" of costing as applied to libraries—particularly public libraries; in fact, I began to wonder whether I was supposed to be a practical librarian or a "crazy cost accountant."

It is submitted that such detailed costing as laid down in this small treatise is not in many cases worth while—at the same time, selected parts of the library service may be subjected to costing over certain periods, and the results obtained may be useful in examining the finances of the library.

A librarian who is efficient at his job (and incidentally paid a salary commensurate with his abilities and responsibilities) would observe instinctively where economies could be effected, and where improvements in the service could be introduced, without the necessity for keeping such detailed cost accounts, and, of course, he would put his principles into practice immediately.

In laying down principles for costing as applied to libraries, distinction should be drawn between (a) commercial libraries—e.g. the "tuppenny," or the membership subscription library, and (b) public libraries. In the one case, the ultimate motive is profit; in the other case, *service*—constant and ever-present—is the essential feature.

One of the most important functions of a public librarian is to give *service* to the public, having regard to the different classes of readers to be catered for. He should not only create a demand for particular types of literature, he should endeavour to *stimulate* such a demand. He is not therefore interested in the output of his library from the point of view of the "cost per issue," but from the point of view of the "satisfied customer," the "reader" who will be so impressed with the efficiency of the library service that he will be encouraged to make the best possible use of it.

Costing for "costing's sake" should therefore be discouraged, and it is submitted that the preparation of elaborate analyses of the cost per issue, or per binding, or per accession, as propounded by the author, is rarely necessary. Admittedly it is essential that the finances should be subjected to close scrutiny and frequent examination and comparison, but in practice it will be found that a test check on any particular item,

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e.g. the expenditure on heating, lighting, cleaning, etc., may be all that is necessary to reveal waste or extravagance. Even the author bids us not to be too pedantic in this direction!

Perhaps the most surprising statement in the book is that "One of the most important directions in which costing can be applied with advantage is in connection with petty cash payments." All I would say on this is, that if you find your librarian making elaborate mathematical costings of the petty cash—change your librarian—he's missing something somewhere!

T. B.

E. A. SAVAGE. *The Librarian and his committee.* (Grafton. 1942.) 12s. 6d. The combination of wit, shrewd judgment and experience make this the first completely readable book on librarianship I have come across. No hash of stale facts for Mr. Savage: his ideas are original, his style is entirely free from pomposity; even his "specimen forms" show a keen sense of humour. Many of the ideas one might quarrel with; yet these ideas spring from his wide experience of various committees. The book is, in fact, a compendium of "what a young librarian ought to know"—and "librarian" includes "assistant."

W. B. S.

Correspondence

Administration Department,
Central Library, Sheffield, 1.

The Editor,
The Library Assistant.

Sir,—

Those of your readers who have followed the correspondence between Mr. Newcombe and me should know that my letter which appeared in your August-September number was first sent to the *Record*, whose Editor refused to publish it. This further evidence of the Goebbelsian itch which seems to afflict certain officers and members of the L.A. Council, shows how essential it is that the *Assistant* should be preserved as an independent library journal.

May I trespass further on your kindness by calling attention to another matter of some importance? The Director of the School of Librarianship wrote the following in an article on "Librarianship after the War" in No. 60 of *The Link*, published by the Old Students' Association:—

"... In the past the public library service has absorbed comparatively few of those who have had academic training, for two reasons. In the first place the public libraries have remained unconvinced, in spite of the frankest criticism from the library-using public, of the need for better educated staffs to deal with a better educated public. There are exceptions, but all too frequently the authorities and their servants regard the public in much the same light as the mechanics' institutes regarded their readers, that is to say, as well-meaning but not very intelligent people, who must be treated with kindly indulgence. Worse still, they continually replenish their staffs with young assistants who absorb and imitate this point of view. In this sort of atmosphere the academically trained assistant, taught to know his own mind and to appreciate intelligence in others, is not likely to be welcome.

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"Nor is he likely to feel at home, and that, I believe, is the other, and perhaps the chief, reason why so few School of Librarianship students have entered public libraries. Faced with the inevitable sense of frustration induced by the prospect of long years of absorption in routine instead of in service, they have drawn back and sought an outlet for their ambition in the more immediately satisfying work of a university or special library. I have seen many instances of this during my short experience at the School. Naturally, the tendency of our students to turn their backs on the public library only reinforces the obstructiveness of those who might otherwise help them."

Here is nonsense of a particularly mischievous kind. As one who employs the University, Library School and Library Association products in harmonious and effective librarianship, I regret that Mr. Cowley should have so far forgotten his wide responsibilities as to attempt to encourage a silly form of intellectual snobbery. Surely daily contact with books should put us above this sort of thing.

Yours faithfully,

J. P. LAMB.

Election of National Councillors

The following have been elected :—

W. H. Phillips	-	-	-	-	674
A. Ll. Carver	-	-	-	-	644
Miss M. Noble	-	-	-	-	574
Miss S. Jacka	-	-	-	-	535
H. Marr	-	-	-	-	489
Miss M. B. Jones	-	-	-	-	472
Miss C. Madden	-	-	-	-	463
Miss D. Chilcot	-	-	-	-	430

Not elected :—

R. W. Law	-	-	-	-	318
Miss M. E. Pitts	-	-	-	-	293
Miss W. M. Heard	-	-	-	-	279
E. W. Garner	-	-	-	-	276
A. H. Jenn	-	-	-	-	221

E. M. EXLEY,

Hon. Secretary.

Scrutineers { Mrs. P. Davies
Miss O. Powell

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